

Stairs & Stair Railings

WAC 296-800-250

Summary

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY:

To make sure stairs used by employees are safe

You must:

Provide fixed stairs where required
WAC 296-800-25005 Page 250-2

Provide stairs that minimize hazards
WAC 296-800-25010 Page 250-4

Provide handrails and stair railings
WAC 296-800-25015 Page 250-4



Exemptions:

This rule does **not** apply to:

- Stairs used exclusively for fire exit purposes.
- Construction operations (See WAC 296-24-76503 for the specifications for the safe design and construction of fixed general industrial stairs).
- Private buildings or residences.
- Articulated stairs (for example, stairs used at a marina).
- Nonindustrial and monumental stairs are excluded as they are not industrial stairs; however, when public and private building steps are located at loading or receiving docks, in maintenance areas, etc., or are used exclusively by employees, the requirements of this rule must apply.



Note:

The introduction has important information about building, electrical and fire codes that may apply to you in addition to WISHA rules. See "How do the WISHA rules relate to building, fire, and electrical codes" in the Introduction Section of this book.



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Rule

WAC 296-800-25005

Provide fixed stairs where required

You must:

- Install fixed stairs where:
 - Employees travel between different levels on a predictable and regular basis.
 - Access to platforms is required to give routine attention to equipment under operation.
 - Daily movement between elevations is required to gauge, inspect, and maintain equipment where those work assignments may expose employees to acids, caustics, gases, or other harmful substances.
 - Carrying tools or equipment by hand is a normal work requirement.
- Not use spiral stairways except as secondary exit routes.



Note:

- You can use fixed ladders for climbing elevated structures, such as tanks, towers, and overhead traveling cranes, when their use is common practice in your industry.
- You can use winding stairways on tanks and similar round structures if the structure's diameter is at least five feet.
- You could use a spiral stairway as an exit route in a restricted area that lacks room for a conventional stairway.

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Rule

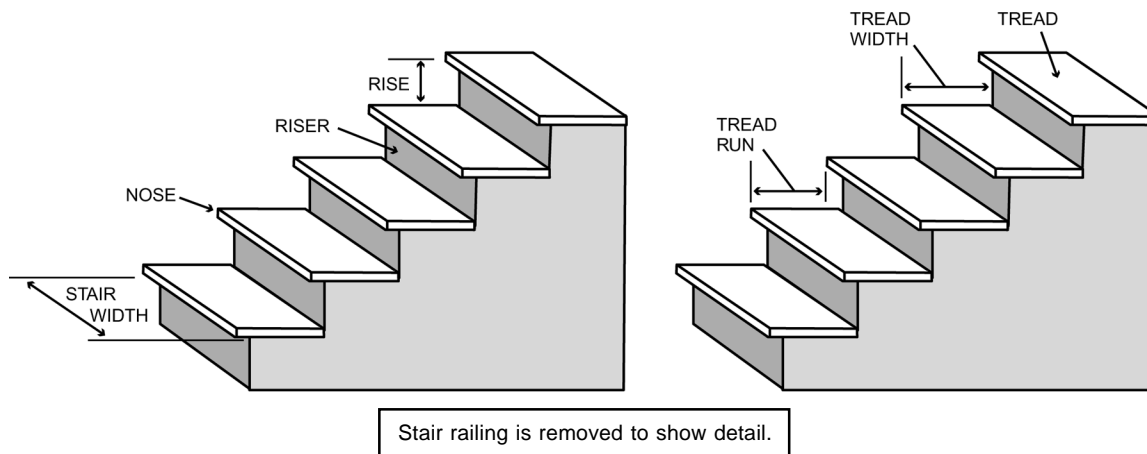
WAC 296-800-25005 (Continued)



Definitions:

- A stairway or fixed stairs is a series of steps and landings:
 - Leading from one level or floor to another
 - Leading to platforms, pits, boiler rooms, crossovers, or around machinery, tanks, and other equipment
 - Used more or less continuously or routinely by employees or only occasionally by specific individuals
 - With three or more risers.
- A riser is the vertical part of the step at the back of a tread that rises to the front of the tread above.
- A tread is the horizontal part of the step. Tread width is the distance from the front of the tread to the back.

Stair Components



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Rule

WAC 296-800-25010

Provide stairs that minimize hazards

You must:

- (1) Make sure stairs have slip-resistant treads.
- (2) Make sure that stairs with four or more risers have:
 - Railings on the open sides of all exposed stairways and stair platforms
 - Handrails on at least one side of closed stairways, preferably on the right side while descending.
- (3) Provide a platform where doors or gates open directly on a stairway. The swing of the door must not reduce the effective width of the platform to less than 20 inches.



Note:

To see all of the rules for building fixed stairs, refer to WAC 296-24-75011 and 296-24-765 of the General Safety and Health Standard.

WAC 296-800-25015

Provide handrails and stair railings



Exemption:

Vehicle service pit stairways are exempt from the rules for stairway railing and guards, if they would prevent a vehicle from moving into a position over the pit.



Definition:

- A handrail is a single bar or pipe on brackets from a wall or partition to provide a continuous handhold for persons using a stair.
- A stair railing is a vertical barrier attached to a stairway with an open side, to prevent falls. The top surface of the stair railing is used as a handrail.

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Rule

WAC 296-800-25015 (Continued)

You must:

- Make sure stairways less than forty-four inches wide have:
 - At least one handrail, preferably on your right side as you go down the stairs, if both sides are enclosed.
- **OR**
 - At least one stair railing on the open side, if one side is open.
- **OR**
 - One stair railing on each side, if both sides are open.
- Make sure stairways more than forty-four inches wide but less than eighty-eight inches wide have:
 - One handrail on each enclosed side.
 - One stair railing on each open side.
- Make sure stairways at least eighty-eight inches wide have:
 - One handrail on each enclosed side.
 - One stair railing on each open side.
 - One intermediate stair railing located approximately midway of the width.
- Equip winding stairs with a handrail, offset to prevent walking on all portions of the treads, less than six inches wide.



Reference:

Railings must consist of a top rail, intermediate rail, and posts. To see all of the rules for building handrails and stairway railings, refer to WAC 296-24-75011 of the General Safety and Health Standard.

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Notes
